



STATE OF MICHIGAN

**Family
Independence
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News Release

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Governor Engler Hosts Achiever Luncheon

LANSING—Vivian Gonzalez of Three Rivers had lunch with Governor John Engler on Friday, December 7.

On that date, Engler hosted a luncheon to honor Family Independence Agency Achievers of the Month and their employers. The private event was held at the George Romney Office Building in Lansing.

“You have made remarkable progress toward self-sufficiency,” Engler said to the representatives of the 2000 and 2001 Achievers of the Month and their employers who were present. You have demonstrated trading welfare checks for paychecks is good policy and good practice.”

The event, first held in 1994, recognizes the success of current and former public assistance recipients who participated in the state’s landmark welfare reform initiative *To Strengthen Michigan Families*.

Ms. Gonzalez was Achiever of the Month in St. Joseph County in June 2001. She was accompanied at the event by her employers, Frank Perez and Joe Austin, of TH Plastics, inc.

The luncheon was also attended by other former Achievers of the Month, their employers, representatives of the Family Independence Agency, the Michigan Departments of Career Development, Community Health, and Transportation and the Governor’s staff.

“These Achievers have overcome a variety of barriers and become independent with the help of public and private sector partnerships and employers,” said Engler.

During the luncheon, Engler heard candid comments and answered questions about Michigan’s welfare system.

I welcome your participation, the information we shared today will help shape future policy,” said Engler. The input of people like Vivian Gonzalez , Frank Perez and Joe Austin have proven to be a valuable resource, and is key to continuing Michigan’s successful welfare program.”

At the luncheon, Engler stressed that Achievers have the opportunity to provide continued input.

“The Family Independence Agency holds quarterly Client Advisory Committee meetings around the state and all the Achievers of the Month are invited to attend and take part. I urge all of you to participate. Your involvement is invaluable.”

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JOHN ENGLER, Governor

For further information, visit the FIA Internet website at www.mfia.state.mi.us